Annex

[English only]

Joint statement submitted by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Scottish Human Rights Commission and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (A Status NHRIs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Title: Adoption of the Report of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context – Mission to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Mr President,

I welcome the opportunity to present this statement in response to the report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing on her mission to the UK. I make this statement in the name of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Scottish Human Rights Commission and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, the United Kingdom's three A status national human rights institutions.

We welcome the Special Rapporteur's report and thank her for her visit to the UK. In her report the Special Rapporteur highlights UK-wide concerns but also recognises the relevance of devolution in relation to law, policy and decision-making in the area of adequate housing. The UK's NHRIs supported the Special Rapporteur's mission with EHRC hosting a meeting with stakeholders, SHRC organising roundtables with civil society organisations and NIHRC facilitating a process of continuous engagement between local NGOs and the Special Rapporteur.

We acknowledge the Special Rapporteur's analysis of the impact of austerity measures, in particular Welfare Reform. All three NHRIs have worked on a range of concerns, including with respect to under-occupancy rules and limits to housing benefit, which can disproportionately affect the most vulnerable members of society.

The Special Rapporteur also highlights the need to ensure the availability of appropriate and culturally sensitive accommodation options for Gypsy and Traveller communities across the United Kingdom. This is also an issue which UK NHRIs have raised in each of our jurisdictions. In addition, the report raises concerns regarding the particular situation in Northern Ireland, where equality and choice in accessing social housing remains constrained by the persistence of community divisions.

The Special Rapporteur's report is a very timely contribution to addressing the need for a sufficient and adequate supply of housing in times of austerity. The UK's NHRIs will follow up on her recommendations in our ongoing work, including through the UPR mid-term report. In Scotland the National Action Plan for Human Rights will constitute the primary mechanism for implementation.

We call upon Government to carry out full assessments and evaluations as recommended by the Special Rapporteur; to ensure, prior to implementation, that new regulations do not discriminate unlawfully; and, that they protect the right to an adequate standard of living.

We look forward, Mr President, to considering her recommendations in our future work and to further cooperation with the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council.